

Western Boundary Current Systems Virtual Poster Session

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LONG-TERM GOALS

To expedite broad exchange of scientific knowledge about Western Boundary Current Systems and their governing dynamical processes.

OBJECTIVES

An information-exchange gap exists between the initial planning-and-conduct stages and the eventual journal publication of scientific research. Our objective is to provide a mechanism to facilitate the exchange of ideas while they are "hot" and still being refined.

APPROACH

We conduct a series of web-based "Virtual Poster Sessions" individually focussed on themes under the broad topic of Western Boundary Current Systems which provide the opportunity for rapid and broad distribution of research.

The home page (Figure 1; <http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc/>) contains the essential components for the virtual poster session. A "poster" page presents invited and contributed posters treating observational, theoretical, and numerical modeling issues. For a given session we invite expert contributions for a particular theme. Similar to real poster sessions, contributions posted on the Western Boundary Current web site do not receive prior peer review or significant editorial action. However, coinciding

with posting each invited anchor article, we arrange for one or more peers to provide "invited comment" --seeking some degree of cross-fertilization between observationalists, modelers, and theoreticians. Associated with each poster, a "forum" page promotes active participation by site visitors, who are encouraged to register, with "threaded discussions" which include questions, criticisms, and replies. A "living bibliography", the Western Boundary Current library, contains a "topical library" with entries from the poster contributors and preregistrants as well as a "cumulative Western Boundary Current bibliography" consisting of a subset of citations to journal articles, which will be built up from session to session.

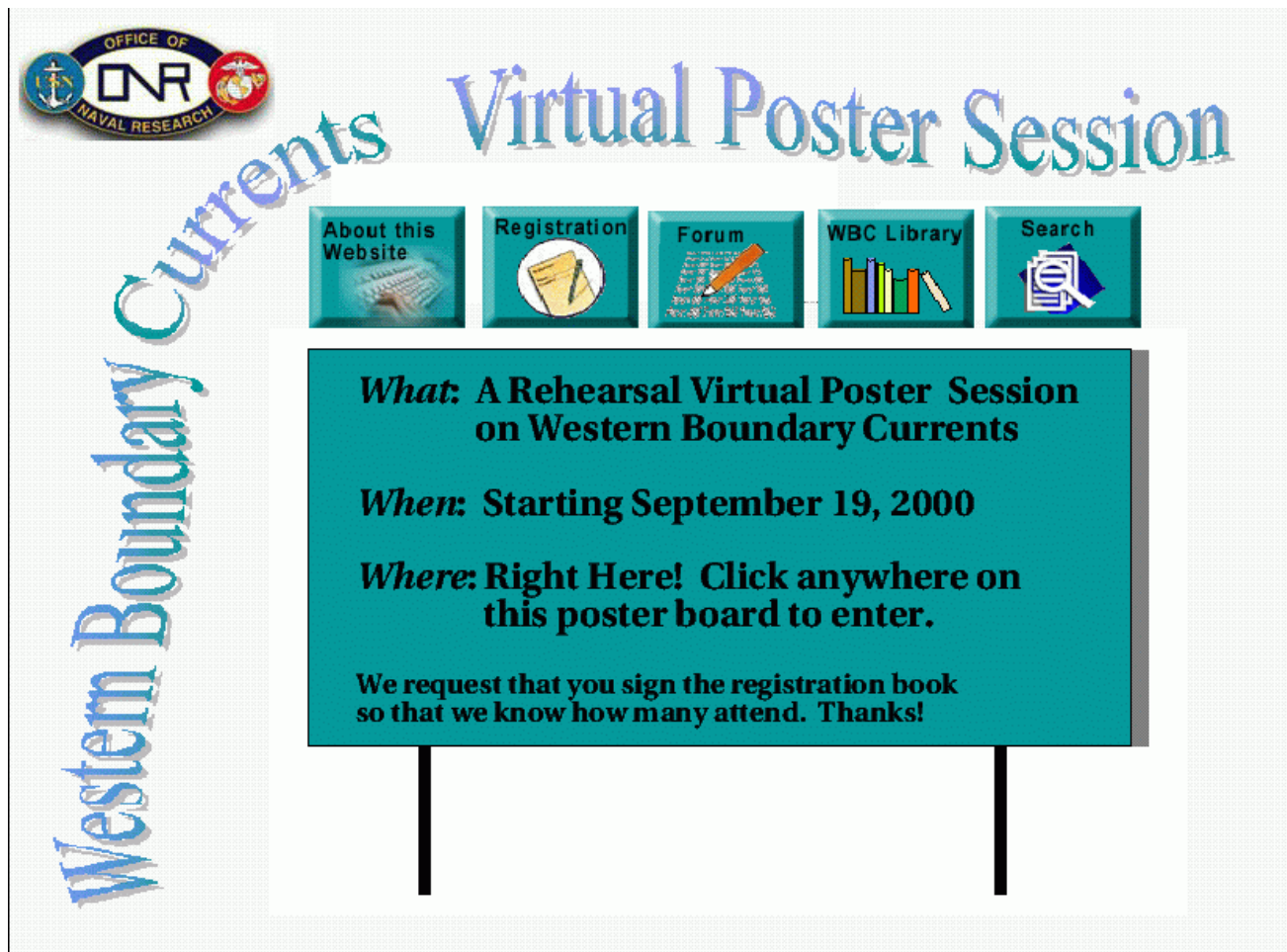


Figure 1. Home page for Western Boundary Currents Virtual Poster Session.
<http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc>

Randy Watts and Kathy Donohue serve as co-editors, with responsibility to gather a broad distribution list, announce themes, and recruit contributors for anchor-articles and invited-commentators. Arlene Guest is responsible for the configuration of the web site, including features such as threaded discussion forums, a search engine for the site, and registration; she serves as the technical point of contact.

WORK COMPLETED

A "warm-up" dress-rehearsal session began on 19 September 2000. The "Forum", "Search" engine, and "Registration" software are working smoothly. This "warm-up" session featured five posters, cited below. Home pages for the individual posters present an outline plus hyperlinked buttons that allow the visitor to easily navigate between sections (Figure 2).

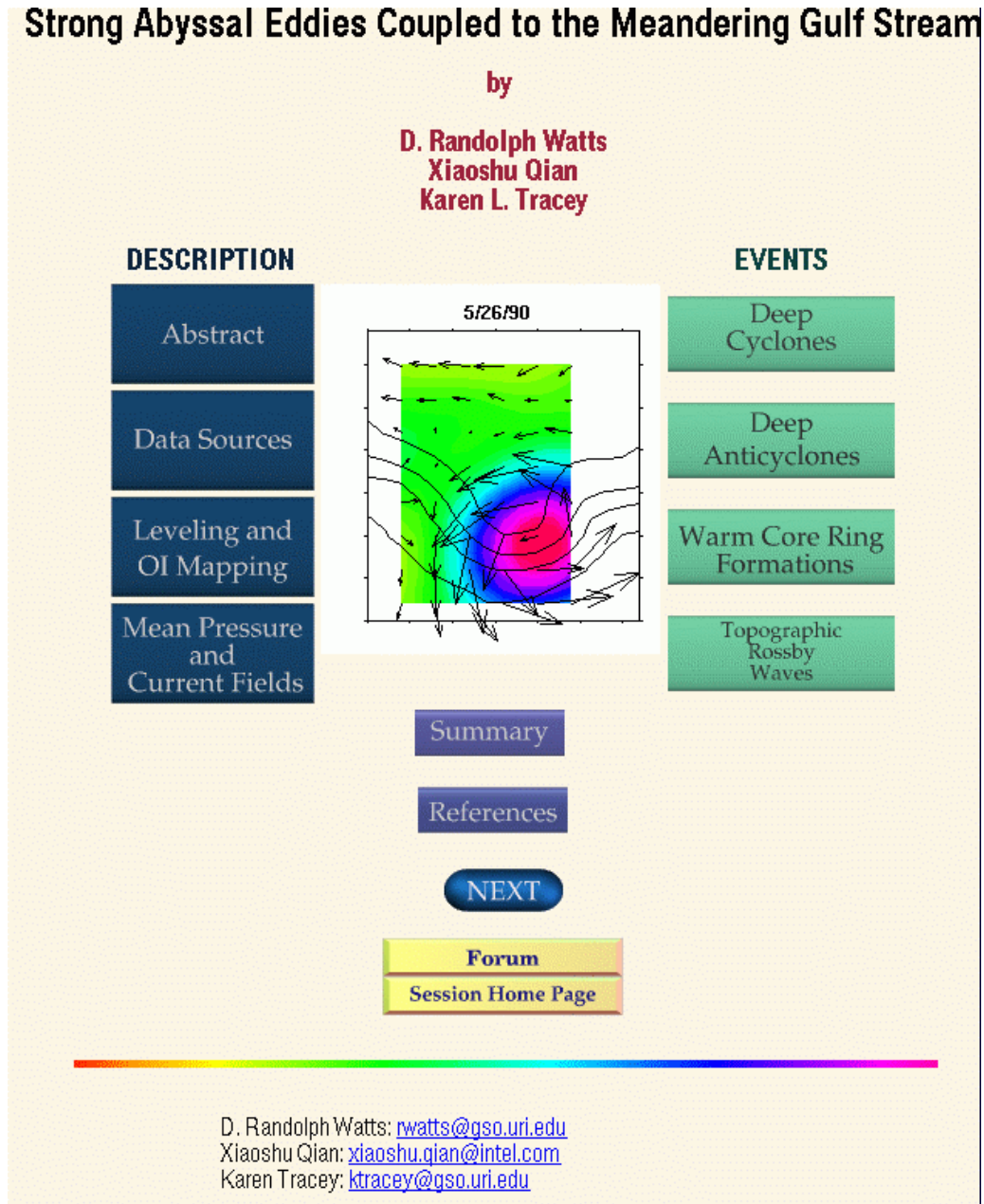


Figure 2. Sample template poster page, developed by K. Tracey. The HTML script is available for other authors/ contributors to fill with their own text and buttons.

We continue to recruit and receive contributions for the late October 2000 issue, which is primarily focussed on the Kuroshio system.

RESULTS

We advertised the "dress-rehearsal" session to only a limited group (about 80 outside URI). In the initial week of the session, we received hits from 200 unique addresses (about half .edu, half .gov, and 17 foreign), with 33 official registrants. Our overall impression is that the session was well received. After viewing the website, several investigators expressed interest to submit future posters.

With the major technical hurdles behind us, we are ready to focus on advertising and promoting the discussion forums. Participation in the discussion forums was less than we had hoped, in part due to the limited distribution list. We are seeking improvements such as (a) automating author notification by email when a new comment is posted to a forum page, (b) allowing invited commentators to *preview* the posters so that their comments are online when the session is released, and (c) by holding a drawing for a prize from the pool of *forum* participants such as a t-shirt or mouse pad with the Western Boundary Current web page logo.

IMPACT / APPLICATIONS

We hope that the web site will benefit students at the undergraduate and graduate level as well as the public, who would have a glimpse into the scientific process and the state of the art in this area of oceanography.

The virtual poster session provides investigators the opportunity to present their results to a world-wide audience with creative graphics, such as animations or large numbers of color plots, that would be impossible or prohibitively expensive in published journals.

We will conduct post-session interviews with the poster contributors and registrants to determine the impact and usefulness of the poster session, *e.g.*, Did they learn anything? Did they get useful feedback? Was it worth the effort? Would they encourage others to participate?

TRANSITIONS and RELATED PROJECTS

Virtual Poster Sessions on other topics are being considered by other ONR PI's. The web templates, Forum, Registration, and Search engine scripts etc. are available to save them development efforts.

REFERENCES – the posters

O. Boebel, C. Barron, P. Richardson, J. Lutjeharms, and R. Davis, *Mixing of Antarctic intermediate water from the Atlantic and Indian Ocean at the Agulhas Retroflection*, 19-September-2000, <http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc/boebel/>

B. Qiu, *Interannual variability of the Kuroshio Extension System and its impact on the wintertime SST field*, 19-September-2000, <http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc/qiu/>

W.J. Teague, G.A. Jacobs, H.T. Perkins, J.W. Book, P.J. Hogan, and J.M. Dastugue, *Current and tide observations in the Korea Strait*, 19-September-2000, <http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc/teague/>

D.R. Watts, X. Qian, and K.L. Tracey, *Strong abyssal eddies coupled to the meandering Gulf Stream*, 19-September-2000, <http://po.gso.uri.edu/dynamics/WBC/>

G. Yuan, H. Mitsudera, H. Fujimori, I. Nakano, and T. Nakamura, *Comparison of acoustic tomography and TOPEX/POSEIDON altimeter measurements in the Kuroshio Extension region in summer 1997*, 19-September-2000, <http://po.gso.uri.edu/wbc/yuan/>